

The Amateur in You, Part 2

What have you been pondering?

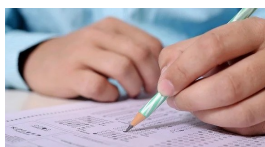


Ham radio for enquiring minds

Have you ever been on a road trip somewhere away from cell service, then thought, ***What would I do if I got stuck out here?*** By experience, you know that walkie-talkies and even CB radio allows you to communicate with your traveling party, but to reach out for help more than a few miles requires a different kind of communication medium, and a satellite phone might be just a little out of your budget.

Ham radio is a nickname for ***amateur radio***, "amateur" because it's not commercial, military, or professional. To legally operate a ham radio requires a license, which requires the passing of an exam that's not very difficult, but does require a little studying. You'll be tested on the rules, operating procedure, general radio theory, and some minor troubleshooting.

Anybody in the US who can pass the exam can hold a ham radio license, regardless of age. Even candidates who are disabled, elderly, or very young can have the exam questions read to them. To make studying easier without having to memorize everything for the exam, start at HamStudy.org. After you pass the exam, purchase a radio, practice getting on the air to become acquainted with it, then store it in your go-kit if you want.



Well, if you ***did*** have a ham radio handy, and you needed help, whom will you call? Most people you know, such as friends, relatives, or even police dispatch don't monitor ham radio frequencies, so you won't be calling ***them***. But it ***is*** possible that licensed amateurs are casually listening on ***their*** radios while being engaged in other activities, and they might hear you call out for assistance, even if it's not urgent. Once you get their at-



tention, you can then ask them to call for help in your behalf.

But ham radio doesn't have to be all serious and emergency preparedness either. Many people get into in the hobby of ham radio as a fun and socially engaging pastime. While driving around or sitting in the comfort of their homes, some simply announce that they're listening, or just leave their radios on while they watch TV or work on a project. Then, when an old friend or a new ham announces his or her presence, the two can start up a conversation. And if a third person wants to join the conversation, it'll turn into a three-way party line of sorts.

Furthermore, many use ham radio to engage in the thrill of talking with people around the globe, in far away lands, just for fun. Some do it to contact as many countries as they can, while others try and find how far away they can reach somebody, and yet others do it to test their equipment for long-distance.

So, how can ***you*** get involved with ham radio, or at least learn a little more? Start by visiting noji.com/aboutham and then reach out to a local ham radio club. If you live in Utah County, contact the ***Utah Valley Amateur Radio Club*** at uvarcinfo@gmail.com